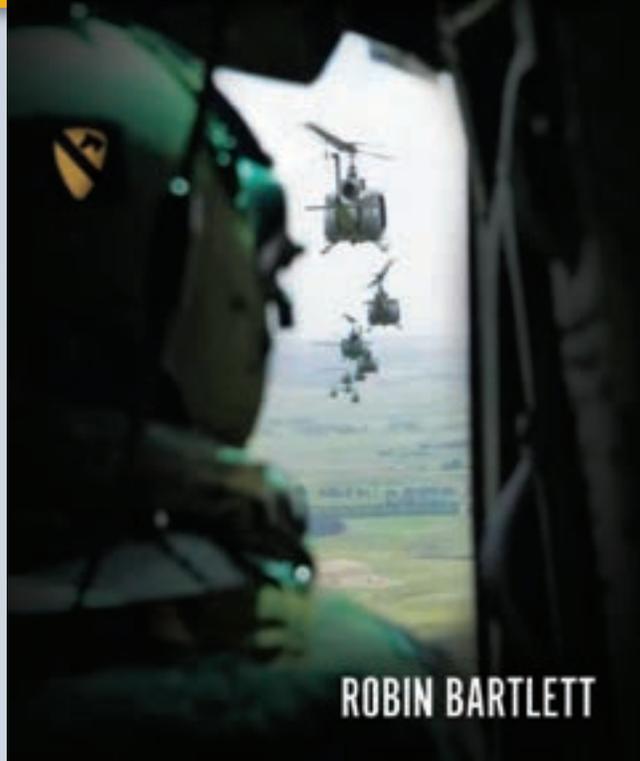


VIETNAM COMBAT

FIREFIGHTS AND WRITING HISTORY



Helicopter Combat Assaults (Charlie Alpha)

The year 1968 was arguably the most significant year of the war. It was the height of the American involvement, and because officer casualties had been so great after the Tet Offensive of January 1968, all prior officer assignments were canceled.

1st Lieutenant Robin Bartlett, originally on orders to the 101st Airborne Division, suddenly found himself at the “repo-depo” in Bien Hoa reassigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The unit had more helicopter support than any other unit in Vietnam. The soldiers carried lighter packs, more ammo and water because of the availability of rapid helicopter resupply. Immediate support from artillery, helicopter gunships and ARA (aerial rocket artillery) was only minutes away to support a firefight. Wounded troops could be medevaced even in dense jungle using “jungle penetrators.” It also meant that Bartlett’s platoon could deploy through helicopter combat assaults into hot LZs (landing zones) at a moment’s notice if an enemy force had been spotted. And they did.

It was with extreme anxiety that Bartlett made his way to join his battalion and company – it was the worst of times to be a platoon leader in Vietnam, let alone a grunt serving in a combat unit. Bartlett also had to cope with personal issues of commitment to a war that was rapidly losing support not only back home but among the soldiers he was leading through the jungles of I Corps on “search and destroy” missions. *Fifty years later, Bartlett’s vivid combat experiences are brought to light in a fast-moving, well-written, first-person narrative expressing the horror, fear, anguish, and sometimes illogical humor of that war.*



About the Author:

Promoted to 1st Lieutenant after only one year, Robin Bartlett at 22 assumed the leadership of the 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Over the next seven months, he led a platoon on more than sixty air combat assaults and search and destroy missions.

Robin Bartlett grew up in a military family. His grandfather, father and brother all attended West Point, however after thirteen elementary and middle schools and four high schools, he decided he’d had enough of the military. But in college, as the Vietnam War escalated and eighteen-year-olds were drafted daily, Bartlett joined his college’s ROTC program and fell back into a familiar routine. Upon graduation as a Distinguished Military Graduate he volunteered for Infantry, Airborne, and Ranger training, and assignment to the 82d Airborne Division. He got everything he asked for...and more.





About the Cav Patch. General Creighton Abrams, while commander of all U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia is quoted as saying: *The big yellow patch does something to an individual that makes him a better soldier, a better team member, and a better American than he otherwise would have been.*

General Peter W. Chiarelli, former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) and the 1st Cav Division Commander during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), said: *Wearing the largest patch in the Army inventory also brings with it a responsibility to be the best.*

Maj. Gen. John B. Richardson IV, the current 1st Cavalry Division Commanding General added: *So, wear the patch proudly, and live up to the standards it represents. Draw strength and inspiration from the patch, from our history, from our veterans, from our legacy. That's what it means to live the legend of the First Team.*

Vietnam Combat: Annotated Table of Contents

The Trail

Preface

Introduction

1. My First Worst Day in Vietnam – dealing with my first KIA
2. Training for War – Airborne and Officer Basic Training
3. Ranger School – learning to lead; preparing to kill
4. Back To the 82d – gaining experience at the 82d Airborne Division
5. First Days in Country – assignment to the 1st Cav Division (Airmobile)
6. Ambushing Gazelles – creative ambush gone wrong
7. The Jungle Penetrator – evacuation in dense jungle
8. FNGs in the Field and Base Camp – new replacement story
9. Face-to-Face – meeting the enemy
10. Pay Officer – paying troops in the field
11. Blown Ambush – failed ambush
12. Saturation Ambushing – ambush technique in hot, dense jungle
13. Recon by Fire – enemy base camp – calling for artillery
14. Beyond Artillery Cover – danger of being out from under artillery cover
15. LZ is Green – landing in a suspected hot LZ
16. Autorotate – falling from the sky
17. Stream Crossing – danger from stream crossing
18. Letting It All Hang Out – failure to get the right size pants
19. Tracer Rounds – starting a fire with tracers
20. Surviving Leg Cramps – becoming dehydrated
21. Ambush in the Rain – the challenge of an ambush in the rain
22. Escort to Laos – escorting CIA into Laos
23. Tear Gas Attack – use of tear gas on enemy
24. Night Firefight – how squad leader saved the day
25. Hard Luck Simons – soldier drafted illegally
26. Walking Point – I did it one time only
27. You Fight It We Write It – staff assignment
28. The Battle of the Parrot's Beak – battle interview and report
29. Assistant Defense Counsel – defending soldiers in trial
30. Buying Art Supplies – trip to Saigon
31. Welcome Home – returning to The World
32. Butterfly Coincidences – unusual coincidences
33. Attributions – recognition of combat photographers and artists
34. A Boots on the Ground Point of View – final summary

Glossary and Abbreviations of Military Terms

US and Enemy Weapons

Military Awards, Decorations and Assignments

Timeline

Bibliography

Resources

Index

Available Nationally: Bookstores/Libraries/Post Exchanges,
Ingram/Baker & Taylor and your favorite online or local bookstore